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## V CORPS ARTILLERY NCO SELECTED AS TOP EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISOR IN U.S. ARMY EUROPE

**By Spc. Rebecca Burt**

V Corps Public Affairs Office

**SCHWETZINGEN, Germany** -- Of the 80 Soldiers who, as equal opportunity advisors, work to make their organizations across U.S. Army Europe healthy environments where equal and fair treatment are afforded to everyone regardless of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin, one is honored each year as the very best. This year that honor went to Sgt. 1st Class Sheila Royal of V Corps Artillery.



SPC REBECCA BURT

Sgt. 1st Class Sheila Royal of V Corps Artillery was chosen from a field of 80 Soldiers as U.S. Army Europe's Equal Opportunity Advisor of the Year.

"It felt pretty great to be chosen," said Royal. "To be selected for this out of all the great people who work here in EO is really an honor."

Royal has worked with VCA at Tompkins Barracks here as an EO advisor for two-and-a-half years.

During that time, Royal's ability to develop new techniques for working and communicating with unit commanders, and pass that knowledge on to her

peers; her strong dedication to her community, and her personal professionalism, are what make her stand out above her peers, said Sgt. Maj. Evy Lacy, V Corps EO sergeant major.

"This is a very prestigious award, because it means that she's the best in all of Europe. It sets her apart from her peers," said Lacey. "We have very good advisors here, and that just means that she's the best of the best."

"She has really worked to form partnerships with other EO advisors so that, together, they can provide training and special ethnic observances for Soldiers on (Tompkins Barracks)," said Lacy. "She also serves on the community committee and is very involved there, working hand in hand with the community."

Royal said she believes the judges considered the fact that VCA was able to run an effective EO operation even while deployed during the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as the unit's full support of USAREUR's campaign to prevent sexual misconduct following its return from deployment.

"We had no EO complaints during our deployment to OIF, and then we really ran with an effective sexual misconduct campaign once we got back," she said. "I was able to take what (USAREUR Commander Gen. B.B. Bell) directed us to do and develop a crisis plan. We also did 100 percent EO training and trained our Emergency Action Center staff to respond quickly and properly to incidents of sexual misconduct."

After winning the title of USAREUR EO Advisor of the Year, Royal represented V Corps and USAREUR at the Army World Wide Equal Opportunity Training Conference in Orlando, Fla., where she competed against the top winners from other Army major commands for the title of the Army's best EO advisor.

"I didn't win the Armywide competition; an advisor from Forces Command did. But the competing Soldiers were all amazing," said Royal. "Even so, I was recognized there for my work, and that felt great."

Royal says the conference also gave her a fresh look at the EO programs in Europe and an appreciation of how active and effective those programs are.

"When I went to the World Wide EO Conference, I realized just how far ahead we were with our sexual misconduct campaign -- at least six months over the rest of the Army," said Royal. "USAREUR and V Corps really worked well with the commanders to get out the info and training that we needed."

Royal also attributes that success to the ability of EO advisors here to work well with each other.

"I work with so many other EO advisors, and we help each other all the time," she said. "I think it's really important to get out and help other EO advisors with their projects and problems. A big part of the job is just being there for any Soldier who needs my help."

One of the most important tasks Royal feels she does at the unit is counseling. Though her specialty is equal opportunity, she said she finds that she can often help Soldiers with many other issues just by lending a helping hand and a caring ear.

"I'm a person Soldiers can talk to; an outlet that they can work through if they need help. I think I can really work as the eyes and ears of the commander, too, because I get to look inside the lower levels of the unit and can see many of the problems

that might be there, and hopefully help to solve them before they need to be taken care of by someone at a higher level.”

